

This leaflet is part of a series written by nurses, doctors and experts with experience in aged care. The series aims to make your journey into residential aged care easier. Look for other leaflets on questions to ask about specific care needs. These can be downloaded at:

www.10questions.org.au

You may find these leaflets useful when:

- Searching for a high quality residential aged care facility
- Reviewing the quality of your current residential aged care facility
- Deciding between two residential aged care facilities that appear similar.

It's important there are enough registered nurses within the staff skill mix to meet everyone's needs. You should ask questions about how your individual care needs will be met.

Many staff wear similar uniforms. Just because someone looks like a nurse does not mean they are. Here are the differences:

A **Registered Nurse (RN)** has undertaken a minimum three-year Bachelor of Nursing course. They can undertake nursing procedures, manage pain medication and help prevent unnecessary hospital admissions.

An **Enrolled Nurse (EN)** works under the direction of an RN. Both are registered by a regulatory body. Registration ensures professional standards are maintained and protects the public.

Assistants in Nursing (AIN)/Care Workers/ Care Service Employees (CSE) are unlicensed. They provide most of the care in residential facilities and community but their level of training is variable.

IT'S YOUR RIGHT TO ASK

If you require advocacy or specialist advice about any matter not covered in this leaflet:

My Aged Care 1800 200 422 myagedcare.gov.au	Centrelink Financial Information Officer 132 300
Seniors Rights Service/OPAN 1800 700 600	Australian Competition & Consumer Commission 1300 302 502

10 Questions to Ask
 ABOUT
 CONTRACTS AND FEES
 IN RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE

To explain how fees work in residential aged care download Contracts and Fees leaflet from www.10questions.org.au

This leaflet has been developed and endorsed by:



For a full list of supporting organisations please visit www.10questions.org.au

If you have concerns about a residential aged care facility contact:

1800 951 822



Australian Government
 Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission

www.agedcarequality.gov.au

10 Questions to Ask

ABOUT ADDITIONAL SERVICES CHARGES IN RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE

www.10questions.org.au

Fees and charges in residential aged care are confusing. For information about standard charges see our 10 Questions leaflet Contracts and Fees. This leaflet covers those additional services offered in Residential Aged Care Facilities using names like “Comfort Club” or “Premium Club” packages. A very limited number have what is known as Extra Service Status and offer all-round top of the range accommodation and luxury services, as defined by the Aged Care Act. These services are not the topic of this leaflet.

1 What are Additional Services?
Additional Services are packages of ‘top ups’ to the standard services offered. Such services vary widely, and could be anything like better shower products, extra meal choices or entertainment packages. These additional services are not regulated so check if the items offered meet your own particular needs.

2 Do I have to pay for additional services even if I don’t need them?
No, it’s entirely your choice. However, be aware some places apply non-negotiable additional service fees as a condition of entry so you should always ask before signing any contract.

3 How do I pay for additional services?
You can simply ‘pay as you go’, as set out in your contract, or accrue charges against your Refundable Accommodation Payment (RAD). At the end of your stay, your RAD will be refunded minus any additional service charges and the interest on those charges. Keep in mind a relatively high interest rate will be applied against both the accrued charges and

accrued interest on those charges. What may seem a small charge for regular additional services can quickly become a large amount.

4 How will I know what I’m entitled to?
Before you move in you should negotiate what additional services you want and are willing to pay for. You should be given information about the cost. Make sure all of this is written into your contract so you and your family know exactly what extras you should receive.

5 I can no longer enjoy a glass of wine but it’s still part of my additional services – can I opt out?
You shouldn’t be asked to pay for services or extras you can’t take advantage of. Ask to re-negotiate your contract with your provider. If you have any issues a list of agencies who can help are on the back of this leaflet.

6 Should I feel guilty if I don’t accept additional services?
You are entitled to receive high standards of care, food and accommodation regardless of whether you pay extra. Just because some people pay for extras doesn’t mean the care and diet for everyone else should be inferior. There is a Charter of Aged Care Rights* that means everyone should receive high quality, safe care regardless of whether they pay for additional items or services.

7 I like a daily cooked breakfast, but it’s part of the additional services. If I can’t afford the extras but I want a cooked breakfast can I get one?
You are entitled to receive person centred care, which means the care you receive should be based on your individual needs and preferences. You can request a daily cooked

breakfast as part of your basic accommodation fee. Your provider must accommodate reasonable requests for food which meet your physical and cultural needs. Remember to ensure anything you individually negotiate is written into your contract before moving in.

8 How will I ensure I get the services I pay for?
Additional services are not government regulated, but the provider is still legally required to fulfil your contract. If staffing shortages mean you don’t get the service you expect, or provisions run out then you may have recourse under consumer law, for services/products you paid for but did not receive. Use the numbers on the back of this leaflet to seek help/make a complaint.

9 Day trips are part of the additional services – shouldn’t I be entitled to these anyway?
The provider has to make sure you are supported to maintain contact with your community and provide social care. However, you may be reasonably asked to pay for anything over and above this such as theatre trips. Make sure you are consulted and consent to pay before participating.

10 Do I have to purchase items from mobile retailers that visit the place?
You should not feel obliged to purchase any items or feel pressured to do so. If you need support to make decisions, your appointed representative/next of kin should always be consulted before a decision to purchase is made. The staff employed to care for you cannot make these decisions on your behalf.

* <https://agedcare.health.gov.au/quality/single-charter-of-aged-care-rights>